grade of natural rubber is Rs. 21.15 per kg. as against the Bench mark Price of Rs. 21.45 per kg. and the lower ceiling of the price band viz. Rs. 20.95 per kg.

(c) and (d). Indian has been a net importer of natural rubber so far. Only during the current financial year, it has not been found necessary to import rubber to meet the demand-supply gap. Price protection is ensured to the rubber growers through STC's procurement operations in the domestic market. However a decision on export, if any, would be taken at the appropriate time.

[*Translation*]

Export of Leather Goods

1429. SHRI SURYA NARAYAN YADAV: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) the foreign exchange earned by export of leather goods during 1990-91;

(b) the countries to which leather goods are being exported; and

(c) the steps proposed to be taken by the Government to export leather goods to more countries?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) The value of exports and hence foreign axchange earned of leather goods (including footwear, footwear components, garments but excluding semi and finished leather) was Rs. 1800.20 crores during 1990-91.

(b) Garmany, USSR, USA, UK, France, Denmark, Italy, Japan and Canada are main countries to which leather goods are being exported.

(c) Market promotion measures abroad and product development efforts to make Indian Leather goods competitive in world markets have helped in increasing exports and these measures are proposed to be continued and intensified, wherever required.

Repair of Ganganagar-Bikaner National Highway

+1430. SHRI MANPHOOL SINGH: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Ganganagar-Bikaner National Highway is not in a road-worthy condition;

(b) if so, the steps taken by the Government for development and repair of this Highway;

(c) the emount sanctioned by the Government for the repair of this National Highway during each of the last three years;

(d) whether the funds sanctioned for this purpose have lapsed; and

(e) if so, the reasons therefor and the action taken by the Government against the delinquent officials?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURACE TRANSPORT (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER): (a) No, Sir. National Highway No. 15 from Ganganagar to Bikaner is being kept generally in traffic worthy condition.

(b) and (c). Development and maintenance of National Highways is a continuous process. During the last three years, 1.4.1988 to 31.3.1991, Rs. 175.35 lakhs were allotted for maintenance of this section, and as per information received from the State, actual expenditure was Rs. 175.22 lakhs. In addi-